ITALY IN DANGER OF LOSING FAMOUS PAINTINGS

Correggio's "Nativity," for Which $200,000 Has Been Offered, One Picture That May Be Sold to a Foreigner—Efforts to Prevent Sale of Noted Crespi Collection—Law Fails to Stop Smuggling of Art Works—Art Lovers Everywhere Excited Over the Depletion of Galleries

"VIRGIN and CHILD" by CORREGGIO

"ECCE HOMO" BY BERNARDINO LUINI

"THE NATIVITY" by BORGOGNONE

PORTRAIT by DAVID BALLY.

SEVERAL recent cases illustrate the inefficiency of the law by which Italy seeks to prevent the taking out of the country of the works of art which form her artistic patrimony.

The exportation of certain paintings and other works of art from Italy is prohibited unless a permit is given by the Fine Arts Department and a tax amounting to 20 per cent. of the value of the object to be exported is paid. The State has the option of purchasing the work of art at the price declared by the owner when the permission for exportation is applied for.

In case the work of art is of considerable value the Fine Arts Department, even without exercising the right of preemption, can withhold the exportation permit. The law allows the owner to appeal from the decision of the Fine Arts Department when the object sought to be exported is declared inalienable. The appeal is to the Superior Council of Fine Arts, and in exceptional cases the decision has been quashed.

Although in theory the law regulating the exportation of works of art should safeguard the artistic patrimony of Italy, in practice it is easily evaded. Intending exporters either omit to apply for the necessary exportation permit and succeed in smuggling works of art abroad where they can sell them undisturbed or else they resort to various tricks in order to get the necessary permission. They may bribe officials or increase the price of the object to be exported, thus rendering it impossible for the State to exercise the right of preemption.

The four paintings by Tiepolo smuggled to Paris from Genoa, the frescoes by Pinturicchio stolen from the Petrucci Palace at Siena and the disappearance of many minor paintings from churches and private collections in Tuscany and southern Italy afford ample proof of the law's practical inutility. A curious case has come up in new form under this law.

Last year Signor Cristoforo Crespi of Milan, who owns one of the most important private collections of pictures in Italy, applied to the Fine Arts Department for a permit to export the painting representing a slave, generally known as the "Schiavona," and attributed to Titian. Signor Crespi declared that he had had an offer of $50,000 for the picture. He paid a tax amounting to $11,000 and obtained the authorization to sell the picture abroad.

Recently Signor Crespi again applied for a permit for the exportation of a portrait by Bartolomeo Veneto, for which, he declared, $36,000 had been offered. The Fine Arts Department, while refusing to buy the picture, refused to grant the necessary exportation permit. Signor Crespi appealed to the Superior Council of Fine Arts and in the course of the investigation he admitted that he had decided to sell his entire collection, which includes Correggio's "Nativity," for which he had received an offer of $200,000.

Despite the fact that the law is supposed to protect the artistic patrimony of Italy sufficiently the Superior Council realized that it was utterly impossible to prevent Signor Crespi from selling his entire collection and after long discussion a heroic resolution was taken. A general permit for the exportation of all the piantings in the collection was granted to Signor Crespi on condition that he would make a gift to the State of Correggio's "Nativity." The condition was willingly accepted and very shortly the collection will be sold.

It is of course understood that on each picture sold the 20 per cent. tax will be levied, and lest Signor Crespi, now that he has obtained the necessary permission to sell his collection, should underestimate the value of the paintings with the object of diminishing the amount of the tax it has been decided that each picture shall be appraised by experts.

The question of the sale of Signor Crespi's collection of pictures has been taken up by the parliamentary group known as the Friends of Art, and one of its members, Deputy Marangoni, has given notice of an interpellation to the Minister of Public Instruction asking for a full explanation of the negotiations between the Superior Council of Fine Arts and Signor Crespi. He declares that the sale of the collection should be prohibited.

A commission of three members has been specially appointed with the object of preventing the sale and the Minister of Public Instruction has already taken steps to keep the pictures in Italy until the question is discussed in the Chamber of Deputies. Meanwhile a Milan bank, the Istituto di Credito Milanese, proposed to advance the necessary funds for the purchase of the Crespi collection by the municipality of Milan in case the State does not exercise the right of preemption.

Every effort is being made to prevent the sale of the Crespi collection to a foreign dealer and it is very likely that the decision of the Superior Council of Fine Arts will be quashed. Of course litigation is bound to follow, since Signor Crespi will not be easily reconciled to selling his pictures in Italy for a much smaller sum than that offered to him by foreign art dealers, but it is almost certain that the collection will in any case remain in Italy.

POINTS FOR THE GIRL WHO WANTS TO WRITE

The girl had never even considered writing as a profession. At least she had never seen herself feted and advertised as the author of the last "best seller"; she had never dreamed of newspaper triumphs, nor pictured a front page with glowing letters at the top that spelled her name. She was a plain every day office girl, a peculiarly sensible girl who believed in taking the world as she found it, and trying to paint it with her own rose colored spectacles.

She was a high school graduate with a splendid grounding in structural composition and English. She had been trained by her mother to be faithful in the details of life, and she had inherited the rare instinct to notice little things which other girls pass by; the bootblack at her office corner who was different from other bootblacks because he always sang snatches from the opera as he worked; the little Italian boy who sold pencils at the door of her office building and wore, always, a faded nosegay in his buttonhole—these and other bits of daily color the girl noted and stowed away in the untenanted corners of her mind. But the fact that she might ever weave a story had never entered her thoughts.

One afternoon the girl discovered that she was to have a number of hours of unoccupied time because her employer was out of town and her own letter writing for the day was done. She sat down at her machine and began to type, aimlessly at first, and then with more purpose. She had received that morning an increase in salary and she wrote as if she were explaining to other girls who did not understand the reasons for her "raise."

"How I Succeeded In Business."

That was her title and under it she grouped as if they were the different parts of a cut up puzzle, one misplaced piece of which would spoil the symmetry of the whole, the qualities that spell success in the business world. The girl wrote the story of one of her own days from the hour when she awoke and donned her daintiest shirt waist that she might light the dull office with her presence, on through a tangle of unexpected business situations to the end of the day when she never left her machine until every thread of the day's work was straightened.

She added touches of color to the story, her pleasure when the bootblack hummed a snatch of Hans Sachs's song as he polished her shoes; how she had discovered that the little boy who stood at the street corner and sold pencils was fresh from Calabria and so hungry for flowers that he stole them from a waste heap back of the undertaker's next door. She fitted these anecdotes into the background of fact as bits of rose glass in a colored window are used to reflect and illumine the other, duller colors.

When the article was finished it had real literary merit, but it did not satisfy the girl. There was one mispelled word on the front page which might have been erased, but instead the girl recopied the page. Then she put a back of heavier paper on the manuscript, wrote her name and address plainly on the front page and sent it to a magazine which she had noted as using articles pertaining to different phases of business life. Then she forgot about her first literary venture.

One morning she received a letter bearing the name of the magazine to which she had sent her article. When she opened it she found an enclosure accepting it and a crisp check that spelled an amount double her weekly salary.

This girl's case was an exception? She had genius, inherited ability, luck?

Not a bit of it. While such success as hers may not fall to the lot of every girl who wants to write for the magazines, any girl may copy her methods, and hope to meet with possible acceptances. Magazine writing is not so much an art as it is something much less inspirational—a trade. Like dressmaking, bookkeeping, teaching, landscape gardening or any of the professions open now to women, the trade of writing must be studied, and its principles learned before a girl can find a fair measure of remuneration in the magazine game. The girl succeeded because she applied unconsciously in her writing certain principles that make any story saleable.

She wrote because she had something original to say.

She set down her facts in careful sequence, embellishing the theme only when some anecdote or bit of colorful description helped to strengthen a point.

She combined neatness, correct punctuation and simplicity in preparing her manuscript.

She studied the magazine market to discover where her article would fill an editorial need.

The front pages of the current magazines are full of names. The successful short story writer, the "muckraker," the writer of big, technical articles have all found a pay streak in the magazine mine. They have struck a popular note, have been able to command front seats and extract exorbitant prices. But a magazine has only one front page. Back of it are a dozen, two dozen other pages that are waiting for unexpected contributions, among them the manuscript of a girl who wants to write.

What shall she write about?

Perhaps the girl has discovered how to dress more tastefully than her friends on a more limited income. An account of her home dressmaking, her experiences in discovering bargains in out of the circuit shops, her dainty gown accessories and millinery makeshifts will all make a readable article. Perhaps she is earning her living in a unique way. The story of the old fashioned garden that she planted in a city back yard and how it gave her foxgloves and tulips for the Fifth avenue shops; the sweets and jams that she concocts in her kitchen and markets at other people's front doors; the book plates she designs and the hundred and one other novel means she has discovered of gathering shekels will help the readers of the magazine to be equally self-supporting. Perhaps she has found a new way of serving an ice, a pretty device for a luncheon decoration, has managed cleverly some amateur theatricals—any of these ideas may be incorporated in a magazine article that will be welcome at the editor's desk.

How shall she write?

The magazine audience is very like the audience at a first night performance of the drama. Unless its attention is caught the moment the curtain rises it is very doubtful if it will sit through the remainder of the play. This is precisely the case with a magazine article. The first paragraph, the opening sentence, should catch the reader's attention, exciting his curiosity and arousing his interest.

This introduction may be an anecdote, a bit of interesting word color, a sentence that is so meaty and crisp that it acts as a text and hints what is coming. Following this introduction come the series of carefully worded facts which do not so much prove as explain the theme to a reader who perhaps knows nothing about the subject—has never heard of it before. There should be no unnecessary phrasing.

Each sentence, each figure of speech, each word must be selected because it will illuminate the theme. Barrie's description of Tommy's agony in the Thrums schoolhouse as he spent a whole afternoon trying to think of one word that he needed for the opening paragraph of his composition is a fable for authors. Tommy lost the prize, but he found the word at the end of the long afternoon—and that was what really counted in the matter.

When the writer has fixed upon the form in which to couch her facts, and she will have to choose simple phraseology, assuming that the reader is unacquainted with the matter about which she writes, she will carefully string her facts on the thread of the theme, like beads on a rosary, each in its place and each helping to complete the chain.

Taking the suggested description of the back yard garden, the method of writing it may be illustrated.

The girl selects a title that tells:

"How I Made a City Garden Pay."

She opens her article with a word picture, in which she describes the little winding flower bordered path, the roses that she coaxed into bloom, the beds of sweet william, phlox and lilies. When she finishes the reader has to read. The color of the roses, the perfume of the lilies attract involuntary attention. Then the girl writer swings into her facts. She tells where she bought her seeds, bulbs and cuttings; how she prepared her soil and when and how she planted.

She describes her method of marketing the flowers, and to form the climax of her article she sums up monetary results and hints that other paying city gardens are both possible and feasible. When her copy is completed she has the manuscript typed on one side only of firm medium weight paper, leaving one page blank for the title and her own address. She attaches stamps for its return if found unavailable, she packs it, flat or folded twice, in a large envelope; seals it and weighs it to be sure that it will not call for excess postage at the editorial office.

How shall the girl address her first story?

What is the magazine market?

There are over a thousand places to sell manuscripts in the United States, with almost as many different needs. The writing market is made up of magazines that want only stories or no stories; magazines devoted entirely to the interests of women and the home, business magazines, theatrical magazines, needlework, outdoor, juvenile, educational, animal, literary, craft and art magazines. Should the girl send her garden article to a theatrical magazine she may be reasonably sure that the editor will decline it.

If she addresses it to a household or an outdoor publication it stands a fair chance of being accepted. To know the magazines intelligently the girl who wants to write must grasp every possible chance to read magazines and discover their general makeup. A few moments wait for the train in the tube gives an opportunity for going over the layout of magazines on the newsstand. There are hundreds of periodicals available in the public libraries and the book shops. Running through them quickly gives a general idea of their editorial needs.

The magazine market is peculiarly forehanded in buying its wares. The garden article will have to be an account of last year's garden, submitted during the winter or early spring to find a place in a summer issue of the periodical to which it is addressed. Because of foreign mailing lists and the time involved in illustrating and printing the leading periodicals are made up anywhere from three to six months in advance of the issue.

Last January one of the big household magazines began buying material for next Christmas, and the editor said that by May his holiday issue for the following year was all planned and laid out. An author finds it difficult indeed to write about snow in August and gardens in December, but unless this habit of thinking ahead is cultivated the girl's first article will very likely be returned for lack of seasonableness.

Special articles adapted to holiday seasons are always in demand if they reach the editor's desk soon enough. Ideas for Thanksgiving entertainment, unique ways of spending a summer vacation, Christmas party ideas, the latest scheme for celebrating Washington's Birthday are all perfectly saleable if they are clearly and concisely written.

The editor has been pictured as a very fierce personality indeed, an ogre who sits in a mahogany cage waiting to eat up the spawn of the literary pool. In reality he is a very much abused and an exceedingly reasonable man. He knows the kind of article that will make his magazine sell, and he knows good writing when he sees it.

LOWER EAST SIDE ENGLISH

We Americans pride ourselves on the fact that we speak one language throughout the length and breadth of the great country of which we are so justly proud. We assure our foreign visitors that if they can understand English at all they can understand it anywhere in the United States. It is not as in England, where the farmer in Kent speaks one dialect, his Devonshire friend another, while the Yorkshireman seems almost to be speaking a different tongue. In Italy too, and in France and Germany to some extent, inhabitants of one section use a patois of their own, often differing not inconsiderably from that of their distant countrymen.

In spite of all our boasting, however, one is forced to admit that the casual visitor to New York's Lower East Side may find real difficulty in understanding the speech. Of course it is easy enough to account for this strange variation of our mother tongue when one stops to think that to a large proportion of the people inhabiting this region English is not the native language. Poles, Hungarians, Russian Jews, Germans, Italians and Hebrews all struggling with a new tongue will naturally create all sorts of new expressions, and these modes of speech are just as naturally acquired by their children, who, adding touches of correct English as it is taught them in school, produce a curious jargon.

It is interesting though often a well nigh hopeless task for the teacher in the school to attempt to weed out the picturesque improprieties of speech in these youngsters and to implant in their places the seeds of the real English language.

A small child who had not been in school for several days returned joyfully one morning and announced with an air of importance as her excuse for absence:

"They made me an operation on my ear."

One of her comrades who had sought to find out the reason for the other's absence said:

"I extra went into her store to see the why she didn't go to school." Here "extra" is used frequently among these people for "on purpose."

Another youngster sent to remove apparent evidence of being a most strenuous member of the Black Hand society asked after scrubbing vigorously:

"Will I spill out the water out of the basin?" "Spill" always meaning "to pour out."

These little folks, in spite of the clamor of the noisy streets in which they have been brought up, have a great dislike to being shouted at, and they speak most disdainfully of "a hollerin' teacher"! Says one small person angrily:

"She screams on Jewish at me."

The expression "stood up" is universally used for "got up" and "put ourselves on" or "made ourselves" for "dressed." For example such statements as the following are often heard from small scholars who are late or nearly so:

"We stood up late to put ourselves on because we went on a wedding last night." "On" is very generally used for "to."

"We had to make ourselves in a hurry because we didna want to make us late for school."

"The girl from our house her mother put her on two golden caps and when she smiled she looked so nice."

"She put on an albert and a dervy she should look like a man." (Dervy for derby.)

Instead of "taking off" any article of clothing they "put it out," as in this case when one little girl who had been given a pretty white apron at a settlement Christmas tree:

"I'm going to put my apron out when I go home to keep it clean."

Relating the news of the death of a "next door," one child said:

"He was the best boy from the family—he had a bride already. She was in Europe and she's riding here, but she doesn't know it."

Many another common expression demands a glossary, as for instance:

"That's the why we are late."

"It's fair she did." (Fair meaning "true.")

"She extra tries to do it."

"My mother works in the shop, but my father don't. He works on a job like they make a building."

"I don't do her nothing—every time she starts up with me."

"She got so hit like anything by the man."

"Everything she says to me I say her after."

"The girl was a greenie." (Greenie meaning greenhorn.)

"The girl is a red one." (Red one means red headed.)

It is a well known fact that one of the prevalent customs which the welfare workers and health officials have to combat is that of the mothers sewing the children up for the winter in heavy underclothes, thus eliminating the possibility of baths, so obnoxious to many. One little girl told her teacher with great glee that she had a new winter dress, but she continued:

"I couldna wear my dress to-day because my mother had to sew me up."

Very often there are most exciting tales of local happenings to be told to the teacher, and when school hours are too short to give all the desired opportunities for free speech letters have to be resorted to. For example:

"Dear teacher:

"One day a lady went by a hairdresser to get herself combed because she was going on a wedding. The while the lady what owns the store was combing her she saw two braids and put them under her shawl. Next the lady looked for her braids. She couldna find them. Next she looked under the lady's shawl, next she found them, next a cop came and a lady from the third floor wanted to spill down a pail of water on the cop. Next he went away because he didna want he should get wet. Goodby, ESTHER."

Speaking of the always thrilling tales of burglars, one day in discussing the latest event of the kind a little girl announced:

"They have such a kind of medicine when you put it around the house you can't hear anything—you keep on sleeping. That's the why the thieves got in."

While another, continuing the story, said:

"I thought it was two boys playing the craps—that's the why we heard noise. I wanted my sister she should look out to see, but she didna want. Then the thieves came fire escape and stole a golden watch and all the ladies' grand dresses."

Fires and going to the hospital are both commonn occurrences in this particular locality, but nevertheless they possess conversational value. Calamities indeed are matters of pride as well as of grief to many. Indeed it is the pride in being for the moment prominent even in disaster which helps to heal the wound.

One child escaped in the night with difficulty from her burning home. No one was killed, but two members of the family were injured. The child, however, was seemingly more impressed by the fact, as she stated it, that:

"One officer and two expectors came they should see how the house got burned."

Upon inquiring the whereabouts of one child the teacher was informed that:

"She went to the hospital to look for her ear; she had it sick!"

Another day a tiny mite began to cry bitterly for no apparent reason; finally one of her friends explained:

"Her father and mother are dead and she dasen't remind herself of such a sad thing." A passing funeral was the cause of the tears.

"She's in the Visory House—you go there when you ain't got no father and mother. You stay there till you get a father and mother," so spake a child of a missing school mate.

The Hebrew Orphan Asylum is generally known as the "Hero-oughten-sylen."

Likewise, a baby is said to be backtized." "Live flowers" are eagerly received and lovingly cherished.

"I had to wash the clothes to my mother" is not an infrequent excuse for absence.

One important little individual "comes late home because she is the wice-president"!

"Who went past they all laughed at her," asserted another, telling of what she considered a breach of good manners on the part of some younger children.

One teacher was very "fashionable," to quote her small pupils; she wore a ring, a small jewelled pin and sometimes a chain with a tiny locket.

"Maybe you die—to who you leave all dose things?" asked one little admirer, lovingly fingering the bits of jewelry.

"Teacher's" word is law, and aside from that she is very often a much loved person, so the little folks try their best to say as well as do what she requests, but when they have some really important communication to make to her, as is very often the case, nothing but the local patois can express their thoughts clearly and forcibly, to their minds.